

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A fastener comprising:
a housing sized and adapted to retain ~~mate~~ with a fastening element; and
a depressable latch positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element
[within the housing] by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element;
~~wherein the housing is flexible.~~
2. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, further including a flange and wherein the housing and the latch are both connected to the flange.
3. (Original) The fastener of claim 2, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.
4. (Original) The fastener of claim 3, wherein each of the flange and sheet of material comprise a thermoplastic and the flange and sheet of material are heat sealed together.
5. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.
6. (Original) The fastener of claim 5, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.
7. (Original) The fastener of claim 5, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.
8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the latch is flexible.

10. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the latch comprises a flange generally parallel to a base of the housing and projecting towards the interior of the housing.

11. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the latch comprises a ~~protrusion having~~ a portion corresponding to the shape of the fastening element.

12. (Original) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the fastener is formed in a sheet of material.

13. (Currently Amended) A fastener assembly, comprising:
a fastening element;
a housing connected to an inflatable bladder and sized and adapted to retain [mate with] the fastening element; and
a latch positioned relative to the housing so that the latch in combination with the housing retains [to retain] the fastening element [within the housing].

14. (Original) The fastener of claim 13, wherein the fastening element is flexible.

15. (Original) The fastener of claim 13, wherein the housing is flexible.

16. (Currently Amended) A device adapted to contain a fluid, comprising:
a substantially impermeable fluid bladder;
a housing sized and adapted to retain [mate with] a fastening element, the housing being connected to the bladder; and
a latch positioned relative to the housing so that the latch in combination with the housing retains [to retain] the fastening element [within the housing].

17. (Original) The device adapted to contain a fluid of claim 16, further comprising a flange wherein the housing and the latch are connected to the flange and the flange is connected to the substantially fluid impermeable bladder.

18. (Currently Amended) A fastener that can be attached to a surface, comprising:
a housing sized and adapted to retain [mate with] a fastening element; and
a latch positioned relative to the housing that in combination with the housing retains [to retain] the fastening element [within the housing], wherein the latch comprises a protrusion having a portion corresponding to the shape of the fastening element a first portion to which pressure is applied when the fastening element is moved into engagement with the fastener and a second portion upon which the fastening element rests when in an engaged position, at least a part of the first portion being disposed at a distance from the surface which is greater than the distance from the second portion to the surface.

19. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 18, further including a flange and wherein the housing and the latch are both connected to the flange.

20. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 19, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.

21. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 20, wherein each of the flange and the sheet of material comprise a thermoplastic, and wherein the flange and the sheet of material are configured to be heat sealed together.

22. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

23. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 22, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

24. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 22, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

25. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the housing is flexible.

26. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the latch is flexible.

27. (Previously added) The fastener of claim 18, wherein the latch comprises a flange generally parallel to a base of the housing, the latch projecting towards the interior of the housing.

28. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 13, further including a flange connected to both the housing and the latch, wherein the flange is made of thermoplastic.

29. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 13, further including a flange connected to both the housing and the latch, wherein the flange and the inflatable bladder are heat sealed together.

30. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

31. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 30, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

32. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 30, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

33. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the latch comprises a portion corresponding to a shape of the fastening element.

34. (Added) The fastener assembly of claim 13, wherein the latch is depressable and is positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element.

35. (Added) The device of claim 16, further including a flange connected to both the housing and the latch, wherein the flange and the fluid bladder are heat sealed together.

36. (Added) The device of claim 35, wherein the flange is made of thermoplastic.

37. (Added) The device of claim 16, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

38. (Added) The device of claim 37, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

39. (Added) The device of claim 37, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

40. (Added) The device of claim 16, wherein the latch comprises a portion corresponding to a shape of the fastening element.

41. (Added) A fastener, comprising:
a housing sized and adapted to retain a fastening element; and
a latch positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element in the housing, the latch and housing both being configured and arranged to be in an unflexed state while operating to retain the fastening element in the housing.

42. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the housing is flexible.

43. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, further including a flange and wherein the housing and the latch are both connected to the flange.

44. (Added) The fastener of claim 43, wherein the flange is configured so that it can be connected to a sheet of material.

45. (Added) The fastener of claim 44, wherein each of the flange and sheet of material comprise a thermoplastic and the flange and sheet of material are heat sealed together.

46. (Added) The fastener of claim 45, wherein the housing comprises a side wall and a retaining lip.

47. (Added) The fastener of claim 46, wherein the retaining lip comprises a notch to accommodate a fastening element attachment mechanism.

48. (Added) The fastener of claim 47, wherein the side wall comprises a semi-circular section.

49. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the latch is flexible.

50. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the latch comprises a flange generally parallel to a base of the housing, the latch projecting towards the interior of the housing.

51. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the latch comprises a portion corresponding to the shape of the fastening element.

52. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the fastener is formed in a sheet of material.

53. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein the latch is depressable.

54. (Added) The fastener of claim 41, wherein latch is positioned relative to the housing to retain the fastening element within the housing by interference with a lateral surface of the fastening element.

55. (Added) The fastener of claim 1, wherein the fastener is attached to an object and the latch is depressable in the direction of the object.
